

Selfridge Field,
Building #3566 (Air Force Alert Hanger) (Old Alert Hangars)
Ammo road northeast of Taxiway A
~~Harrison Township~~, Mt. Clemens Vicinity
Macomb County
Michigan

HAER No. MI-116-DD

HAER
MICH
50-MTCLE.V
IDD-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
GREAT LAKES SYSTEMS OFFICE
1709 JACKSON STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-2571

HAER
MICH
50-MTCLV,
IDD-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

SELFRIDGE FIELD
BUILDING #3566 (U.S. AIR FORCE ALERT HANGAR)
(Old Alert Hangars) HAER No. MI-116-DD

I. INTRODUCTION

Location: East of North-South Runway, north of Taxiway A
Selfridge Air National Guard Base
14th Clemens via, Macomb Co., MI

Quad/UTM: U.S.G.S. New Haven Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.349630.4720640

Date of Construction: 1952 (modified 1962, 1987)

Present Owner: Air National Guard
3500 Fetchet Avenue
Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland 20762

Present Use: Fire Department; Storage

Significance: This hangar complex is the best preserved and most directly related to Selfridge's Cold War Air Defense Command mission of any facility on base: its aircraft bays still include "Scramble" monitors. Because of this structure's relation to the Selfridge alert mission and Cold War in general, it is one of the best examples on base of national military policies and Communist confrontation during the 1960s.

Historian: William Rutter, Midwest Environmental Consultants, May, 1996

II. HISTORY

The four central gabled bays of this "U.S. Air Force Alert Hangar," were built in 1952 from standardized plans provided by the Butler Manufacturing Company, with alterations to standard construction such as the officer's day room designed by Schley and Ward, Engineers and Architects of Detroit.¹ In 1956 Schley and Ward also designed the pairs of flat-roofed alert aircraft cells that today flank the central gabled cells.² In 1960 alteration/enlargement of the nose bubbles in hangar doors were designed by Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff of Kansas City, while crew quarters improvements were designed by Wyeth and Harman of Port Huron and J.B. Olivieri of Detroit for the Detroit District Army Corps of Engineers.³ In 1987 Goudreau/Wakely Associates of Mount Pleasant designed architectural and demolition plans for the first and second floor crew quarters, creating a modern kitchen, dining area, lounge on the first floor and modernizing the bedrooms, office, latrines and lounge on the second floor.⁴ These areas now display drop ceilings, carpeting,

¹Construction plans on file, Base Museum and Civil Engineers Office

² Original construction plans on file, Base Museum and Civil Engineer's Office

³Original construction plans on file, Base Museum and Base Civil Engineers Office

⁴ Original construction plans on file, Base Museum and Base Civil Engineers Office

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and modern wall coverings and florescent lighting. This building was erected to house Air Defense Command (ADC) jets, but in recent years was converted to storage, environmental related and fire-fighting equipment functions.

III. DESCRIPTION

Building #566 is a massive, rectangular plan, concrete block and corrugated metal structure containing eight prefabricated steel aircraft bays and a central concrete block crew quarters and operations area. The building presents an irregular profile composed of the four central gabled bays (4 through 6) flanked on each end by two flat roofed bays (1, 2, 7 and 8) and the central gabled masonry unit. The exterior footprint of this structure is 602 feet north-south by 71 feet 8 inches deep. The abutting cells are all constructed of insulated vertically seamed metal panels bolted on to steel frame girder and trusses with plans provided by Butler Manufacturing Company of Indianapolis. The overhead doors of all hangar bays facing the runways are built of corrugated metal panels on a steel frame and are raised by massive counterweights that operate the doors along overhead steel tracks. The doors are capable of being manually operated should power fail. All cells but the westernmost Cell 8 display projecting sections that housed the nose of the jet contained within. (Cell 8's

nose section was removed recently and sealed with a metal panel.) The flat roofed end cells use triangular projections while the four central cells employ broader, five sided projections. Solid masonry walls occur between the pairs of hangars that functioned as blast walls to contain potential explosions of armed aircraft. The hangar cells lack windows of any kind and pedestrian entry doors are placed off center in each of the massive overhead aircraft access hangar doors. The gable roofed masonry crew building in the center of the hangar row displays a central pedestrian entry door on the principal (west) elevation that is flanked by a sliding track window. The second story features sliding track windows that abut and carry over to the side elevation that project beyond the face of the adjacent hangars.

The central gable roof crew quarters is 100 feet deep by 32 feet wide. It was originally about evenly divided between an Officer's Day Room facing the runway on the west elevation separated by a stairway from a boiler room. Three small rooms occupy the east end of the building, composed of a Coal Bunker flanked by a generator room and a transformer room. The second floor was divided into four pilot bedrooms, a latrine, central lounge with a crew day room in the northwest corner and an operations and weather room on the southwest corner, both overlooking the runway. The four flat-roofed cells offer

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between 67 feet and 69 feet 6 inches of interior width, while the four gable roofed bays each offer 74 feet 3 inches of unimpeded interior space. A 7 foot 2 inch wide masonry bay separates the flat roofed cells from the gable roofed cells. Although these units are today used for storage, each hangar still retains direct evidence of its role in Cold War readiness. Each retains an electrical alert board and air horn system. The alert board is divided into three horizontal bands: a top green band stating "Scramble," below which is a yellow "Battle Stations" band and a bottom band in red reading "Cancel."

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Anonymous, Brief History of Selfridge Air Force Base, 1917-1960, unpublished ms., Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 1960.

_____, Guide and Directory, Selfridge Air Force Base, Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, 1960.

Narducci, Henry M., SAC and the Alert Program: A Brief History, Office of the Historian, Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, 1988.

Nigro, Louis, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, An Unofficial History, unpublished ms., Public Information Office, Selfridge ANG Base, Michigan, 1977.

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C. INTERVIEWS

Eric Reeve, Selfridge Environmental Management, October 12, 1995

Colonel Robert Stone (Ret.), Curator, Selfridge Base Museum, October 13, 1995

Lieutenant John Neagos, Selfridge Fire Department, March 31, 1996